

Have You Met Ms Meyers?

By Linda Harrison

There is probably no one who knows more about The Four Freshmen and their modern history than Barb Meyers. Besides:

- 1) being the Editor of this quarterly *Fresh News*;
- 2) having been married to Mel Meyers, who was President of the Four Freshmen Society from 2009-2012;
- 3) traveling together on 6-7 Jazz Cruises;
- 4) producing the Toledo Convention in 2011; and...
- 5) living for a time in Las Vegas where they became close friends with Bob and Mary Flanigan.

But let's start at the beginning. Barb became fascinated with The Four Freshmen in high school. She met Mel when she was 17 and he was 20, and it didn't take long for them to realize that they both loved The Four Freshmen. They got married a couple of years later. Mel was a jazz and big band drummer, a job that supported him through college and brought in extra money during their early marriage.

Soon after they were married, Mel spent two years in the army and was stationed in Fort Huachuca, Arizona. After living in Arizona for the two years, they moved back to Toledo for three years and then back to Arizona (Tucson) for 40 years.

Barb said, "We did a lot of traveling in those years. Mel was a department head for Hughes Aircraft and was responsible for opening new departments and monitoring old ones, so there were a lot of trips between Tucson and California. Then he worked for Motorola International and helped open Motorola Israel during this time. I was very proud of his accomplishments there."

Barb was in the banking industry, starting right out of high school. When Mel retired, she opened her own business in Arizona, a boutique that evolved into a successful shoe store for 10 years.

They had three children -- two boys and one girl, all raised in Tucson --

"All senior citizens now," Barb says, but no grandchildren.

The kids grew up in the era of rock, although they do appreciate all types of music.

Mel and Barb joined the Four Freshmen Society in 1994. They started out as state reps selling CDs at concerts. The first FFS Convention they attended was the FFS 50th anniversary in Las Vegas. There

were several celebrities there. As Barb tells it, "Mel and I walked out on the patio and there was Bob Flanigan and Joe Williams having a drink.

Mel said to me, "There is no doubt in my mind I'm in the right place." Mary Flanigan was raised in Ohio, as were Mel and Barb, so they seemed "a little bit of home" to her.

Barb comments, "It was a great friendship. I miss them both very much."

When Barb was in high school, Bob Flanigan was her celebrity crush. She says, "There are not many women who have a chance to grow up and be friends with their high school celebrity crush."

Barb is a breast cancer survivor, and during the time of her treatment -- surgery, chemo and radiation -- The Freshmen and the Flanigans helped her get through it with cards, letters, well-wishes and support for Mel, who was her caregiver.



In this picture with the guys (Group #22) in Laughlin, Las Vegas, Barb says, "My hair was just growing back from chemo, and I was finally feeling good. The guys were so good to me."

After Barb's convention in Toledo, Tom Purvis, who was FFS President at that time, asked Barb to produce the *Fresh News*. He had already set up the layout artist and printer to help support her in publishing the newsletter.

The multiple Jazz Cruises where they enjoyed The Freshmen -- Alaska, Mexico, Caribbean and many other destinations -- were mostly with Group #22 -- Bob, Brian, Vince, and Curtis.

The most memorable cruise was when they left New York on September 7, 2001. When 9/11 happened we were in Nova Scotia. We had many stops ahead of us and our last stop was Montreal. They all had to get off the ship, and a group spent 4-5 days together in Nova Scotia until flights started back up again.

Barb currently lives in Lakeland, Florida. Although she was very happy in Toledo, Mel insisted they move to Florida so she could be closer to her family, which they did in 2015. Two of her kids live in Florida, along with a younger sister and brother.

According to Barb, "I see some hope for the future with younger Freshmen fans. The Bean Tones, a young vocal jazz quartet including Chris Peters, 25, who just joined The Freshmen, recently played in Birdland to a sold-out audience, and they just returned from performing in Japan."

Looking back, Barb says, "We had interesting lives, and The Four Freshmen were a vital part of that. They were the music of our lives."